

Assessment on Revision of Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming (2016-2020), Work Plan on Biodiversity (2016-2020) and Development of Action Plan/Roadmap on ECO Land Care Program

1. Project Category:	Environment / Revision of framework documents
2. Project Code:	---
3. Project Title:	Assessment on Revision of Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming (2016-2020), Work Plan on Biodiversity (2016-2020) and Development of Action Plan/Roadmap on ECO Land Care Program
4. Project Objective(s):	<p>The project aims to deliver the policy documents and actionable roadmaps that would serve as a guiding framework on environmental cooperation within ECO until 2030. The subject documents are expected to be endorsed by the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment and then approved by the ECO high-level decision-making bodies.</p> <p>The objectives of the project are to conduct the ECO region-scoped assessment study resulting in (1) a “Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation 2023-2030” and (2) a “Roadmap for implementation of ECO Land Care Program 2023-2030”, through reviewing and updating the “Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming” and “Work Plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region”.</p>
5. Project Budget (Euro):	9000USD
6. Project Funding Source:	ECO Special Support Fund (SSF)
7. Coordinating Country/Organization:	ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST) in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat

8. International/Regional Partner(s):	None
9. Duration of Project (Months):	Expected to be completed upon approval by the 6 th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment
10. Project Starting Time (M/Y):	March 2022
11. Project Progress Ratio (%):	approximately 95%
12. Expected Project Completion Time (M/Y):	During the 6 th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment
13. Project Budget Released (%):	100% of the project budget has been released and paid as a consultancy fee to the consultant given the progress made, payment schedule, and the project timeline.
14. <u>Background:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (Istanbul, 18 November 2014) emphasized the need for a revised Plan of Action (PoA) for the period of 2021-2030 and instructed the Secretariat to prepare a detailed needs-based assessment of countries addressing Land Degradation, Dust Haze and Sand Storm in ECO Region in this respect. – ECO Secretariat developed the Feasibility Study on Desertification and Land Degradation. That, in turn, served to the preparation of the draft Project Proposal on the same topics. The Member States shared their feedback on the said document. – In July 2016, the Project Consultation Workshop was held in Tehran; further on, land degradation and conservation issues of the ECO countries were identified in search of assistance from the proposed Project. – Draft Project Proposal was elevated to the status of the ECO LandCare Program. – In December 2021, another Workshop was held in Antalya (Turkey) to review the ECO LandCare Program and ways to implement it. – The Republic of Turkey was a Coordinating Country for follow-up and implementation of “Work Plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2016-2020)”. 	

15. Current Status:

- Following the circulation of questionnaires, provision of the inception report and several virtual and in-person meetings between the consultant and the Secretariat, the consultant provided the ECO Secretariat with a draft of “ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment” and its annexes – work programmes on climate change and biodiversity for the period of 2023-2030.
- As regards the ECO LandCare Initiative, it is noteworthy that in response to the Member States' request during the Antalya workshop in 2021, the ECO-IEST developed a brief document to support its inception and determine the most efficient means of implementation of the first phase of the ECO LandCare Initiative (ECO-LCI).
- The above-mentioned drafts were reviewed and modified by the Secretariat in coordination with the consultant and circulated to the Member States for feedback.
- Only the Republic of Türkiye sent its feedback to the ECO Secretariat dissenting the subject brief document to support the LCI's inception.
- Taking into account that no other substantive feedback was received from the Member States, the documents were considered and discussed by the 7th ECO Working Group Meeting on the Environment held online on 20 November 2023. Since the representatives from the Member States did not express any objection to the endorsement of the ECO Cooperation Framework by the decision-making bodies of ECO, this document and its two annexes were forwarded for consideration by the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Environment of the ECO Member States, convened in Dubai (UAE) on 9 December 2023. The ECO Member States following this Informal Ministerial Meeting on the sidelines of the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) released a Joint Statement which, *inter alia*, addressed the matter as follows:

“ Note with appreciation the development of the new “ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2023-2030)” and its two Annexes, namely “Work Program on Climate Change in ECO Region (2023-2030)” and “Work Program on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2023-2030)” as a long-term regional strategy, which streamlines key priorities and action areas in the ECO Region for environmental cooperation in view of the rapidly evolving global environmental and climate agenda; therefore recommend the subject Cooperation Framework for adoption by the decision-making bodies of ECO; also recommend to hold detailed consultation and coordination with a view to

agree upon a common ground document for guiding the regional activities on such topical issues for ECO Region as desertification, land degradation, sand storm and dust haze.”

16. Necessary Actions and Assistance Needed:

- Since the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Environment of the ECO Member States recommended the subject Cooperation Framework for adoption by the decision-making bodies of ECO, the 6th regular Ministerial Meeting on Environment may endorse and submit it to the COM. All Member States are requested to be actively involved in the finalization process of this Framework and its annexes on climate change and biodiversity (2024-2030) during this sectoral ministerial meeting.
- As regards the ECO LandCare Programme, taking into account the lack of consensus among the Member States on the result so far, more consultation and coordination among them are required to find a way out of this standstill and agree upon a common ground document for guiding the regional activities on the significant issue of land degradation.
- The ECO Secretariat has been following up with the Republic of Uzbekistan the hosting of 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment in Samarkand in 2024 and getting the exact dates and modality of convening this event. The response is awaited.

17. Expected Outcomes of the Project:

- Providing the ECO high-level decision-making bodies with a policy support framework and a long-term regional roadmap on the environment, which streamlines the relevant key priority areas to be focused in the ECO region;
- Facilitation of an enabling environment in the ECO region for environmental action and cooperation.